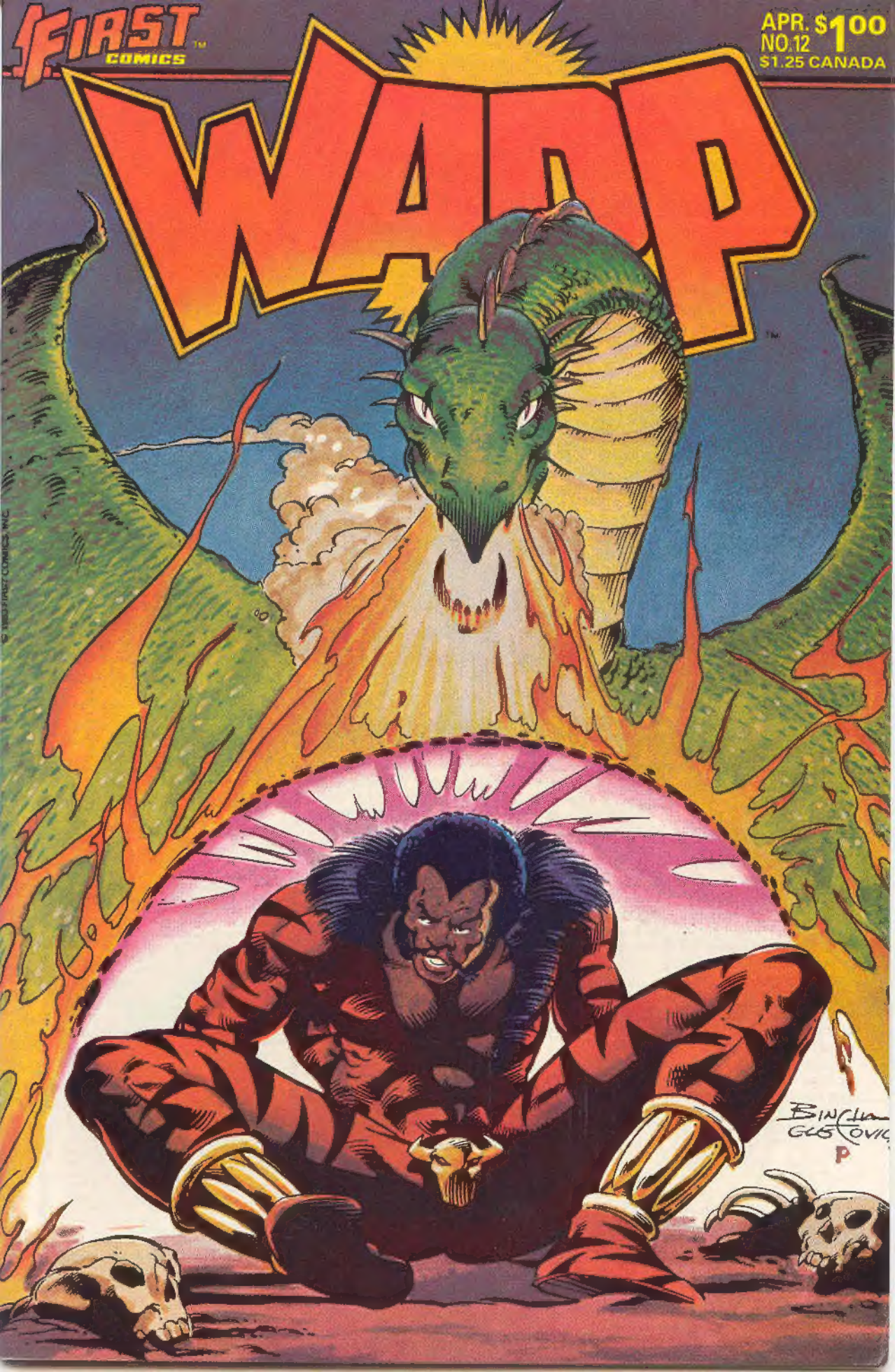
FIRST COMICS
WARP
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NO.12
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# warped words

c/o FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

Dear First People:

During the First Comics panel at this year's Chicago Comicon, there was a question of whether you should go to Baxter paper. I vote no. I believe that the price of comics is getting high enough already and the Mando paper is really good enough. If you have something really special which demands better paper, yes, then, but not on your regular monthly titles. I feel that those Graphic Novels (or as Mike was saying at the convention, "big comic books") with even "higher quality" paper are not really worth the money. The cost of about nine cents per page of story is quite outrageous.

Neil A. Ottenstein
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA 19081

*And this looks like a good opportunity for a poll. Whereas I share Neil's sentiments, I do recall the voice-vote at the aforementioned Chicago Comicon indicated about one-third of the audience wanted us to go to the heavier, white Baxter paper — at the now-standard $1.50 cover price.*

*So, let's hear from you. Should we stay on Mando stock, or should we change over to the higher-priced Baxter paper? Or should we downscale to the lower-priced Marvel Comics format of 23 pages on thin newsprint? We want to know your feelings, so let's hear from you!*

Dear Mike,

I guess I should be upset at this "it was only a dream" ploy (talk about cliches), and I would be, except for two factors. First, there were an awful lot of very funny bits in issue #8, making it the most humorous one so far. I know that this isn't your primary goal, but a little humor never hurts — it breaks the tension, and often makes what follows all the more dramatic.

Second, the power of the dream — Infinity emphasized the herculean nature of their task, and led to Cumulus's defeated statement at the end. I guess there really isn't any way that they can succeed. So, it seems that #9 will, as you say, conclude the universe and then that #10 will be the first comic book in history to contain pages that are all blank.

T.M. Maple
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Mike, et al:

With every issue Cumulus and Chaos grow into a more formidable team with even stronger individual traits. The conflict of opportunities is still there, but an understanding of similarities between them has been overshadowing their differences. The strong point of #8 to me was the willingness of each brother to fight and die when the other was threatened. Chaos is still the weaker, more self-centered of the two, but that's to be expected from one's evil side, isn't it?

To explore the possibilities of the fascinating Ego will require both characters to survive the coming holocaust. The same requirement is there if the continuing good/evil battle is to be maintained.

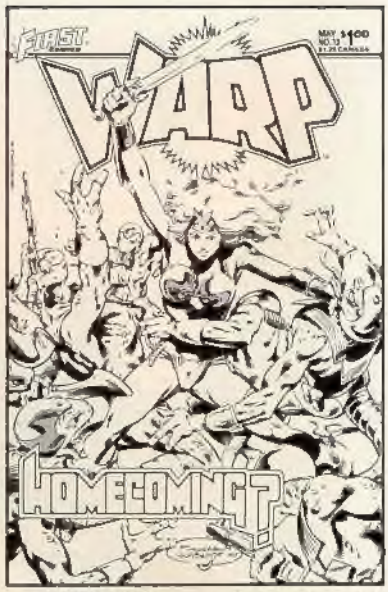
The sub-plot involving the Sargon/Cumulus relationship should be

resumed, but not resolved, after the wrap-up of the adaptation. Sargon is one of the strongest female characters in comics, certainly deserving of her own strip as well as co-starring in the main book. I missed her back-up this issue, but was very impressed by Bill Willingham's art in the Valaria story . . . though I would like to see him ink his own pencils. Knowing Bruce Patterson as an outstanding inker makes me wonder just how powerful the original drawings were.

Mike, your books continue to make me think and write my thoughts down logically. You've got me reaching beyond the obvious and exploring the possibilities of different concepts. I appreciate that.

Sgt. Jeff Webb
Box 9324 CO A USAFS
Berlin
APO NY 09742

**Bruce Patterson** *is one of the finest inkers in the business, but a great inker cannot "save" an inadequate penciller. And* **Bill Willingham** *is the best new penciller we've seen since* **Timothy Truman;** *right now, Bill's stuff is appearing in Texas Comics' Elementals series (his own creation). We're talking with him about a special series, followed by his own on-going series. Stay tuned.*




**NEXT MONTH** Sargon discovers you can't go home again, Cumulus confronts David Carson's past, and a whole new threat is brewing back in Fen-Ra! **Peter Gillis, Jerry Bingham** and **Mike Gustovich** — along with Gillis and **Lenin Delsol** on the Outrider — will be joined by **Rick Oliver** in the editor's chair. I'm taking on a couple of new expansion projects, leaving our flagship title in Rick's extremely capable hands.

— Mike Gold

**Rick Obadiah, Publisher**

**Mike Gold, Managing Editor**
**Joe Staton, Art Director**
**Rick Oliver, Associate Editor**
**Bruce Patterson, Production Coordinator**

**Richard Felber, Business Manager**
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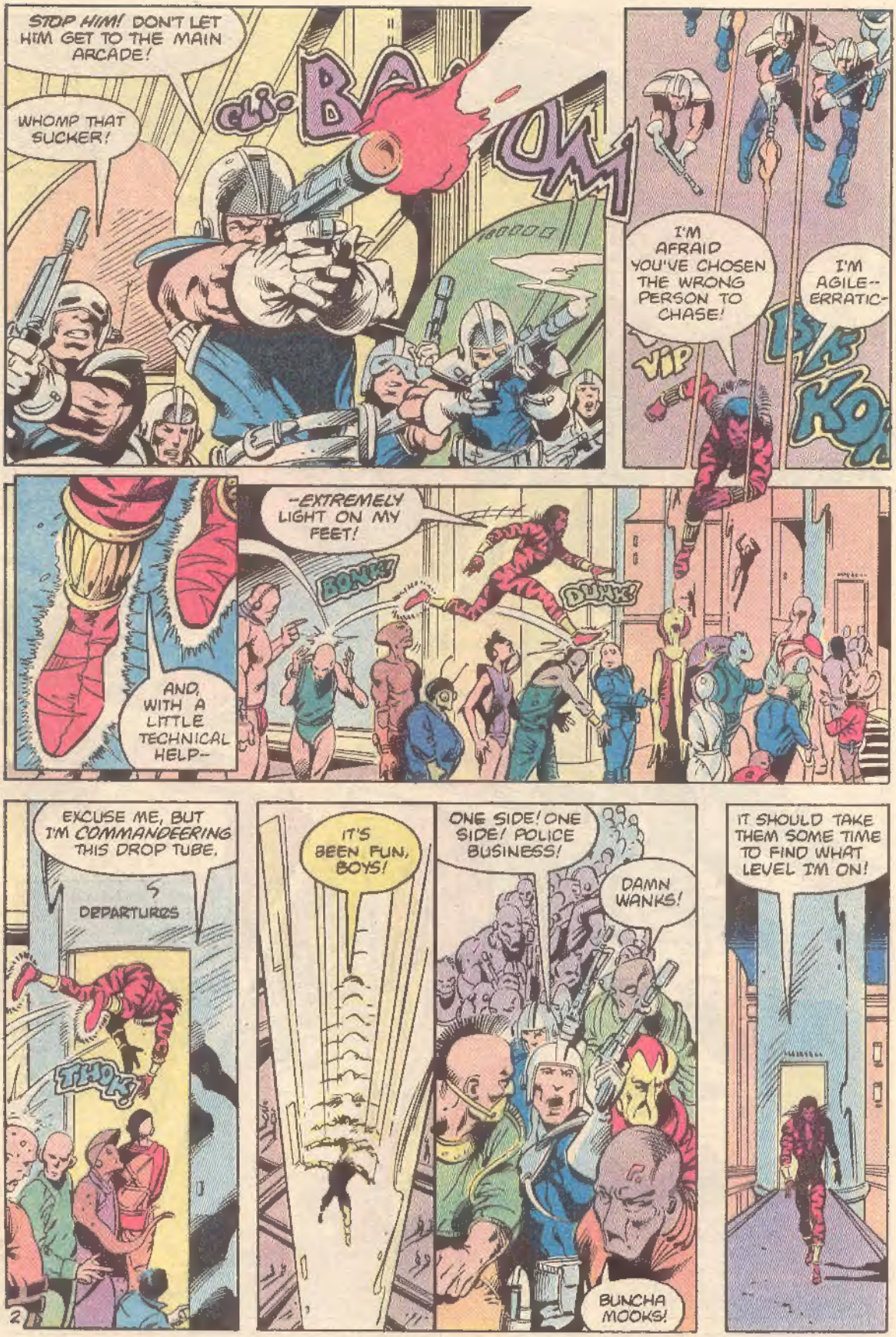
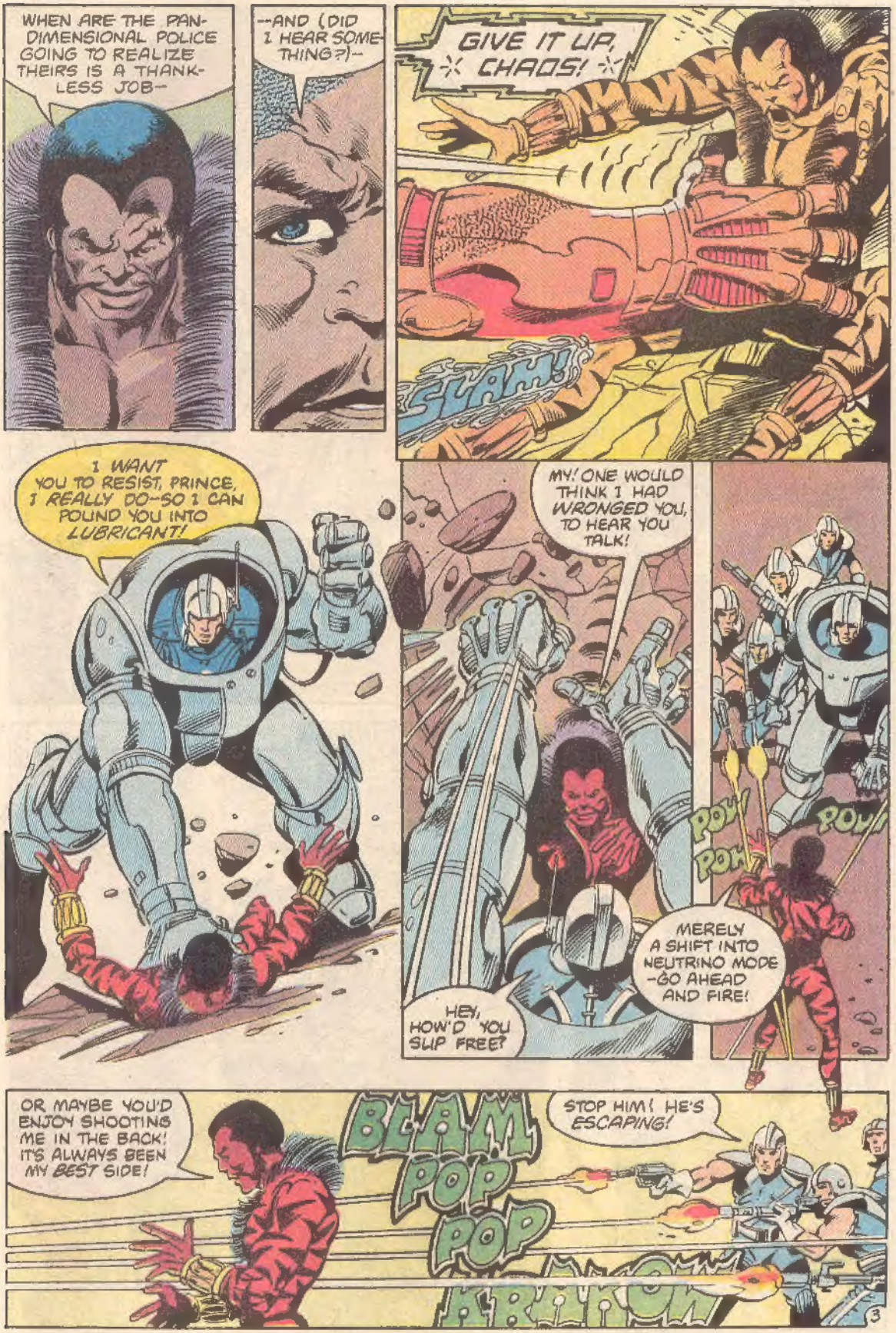
**A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION**

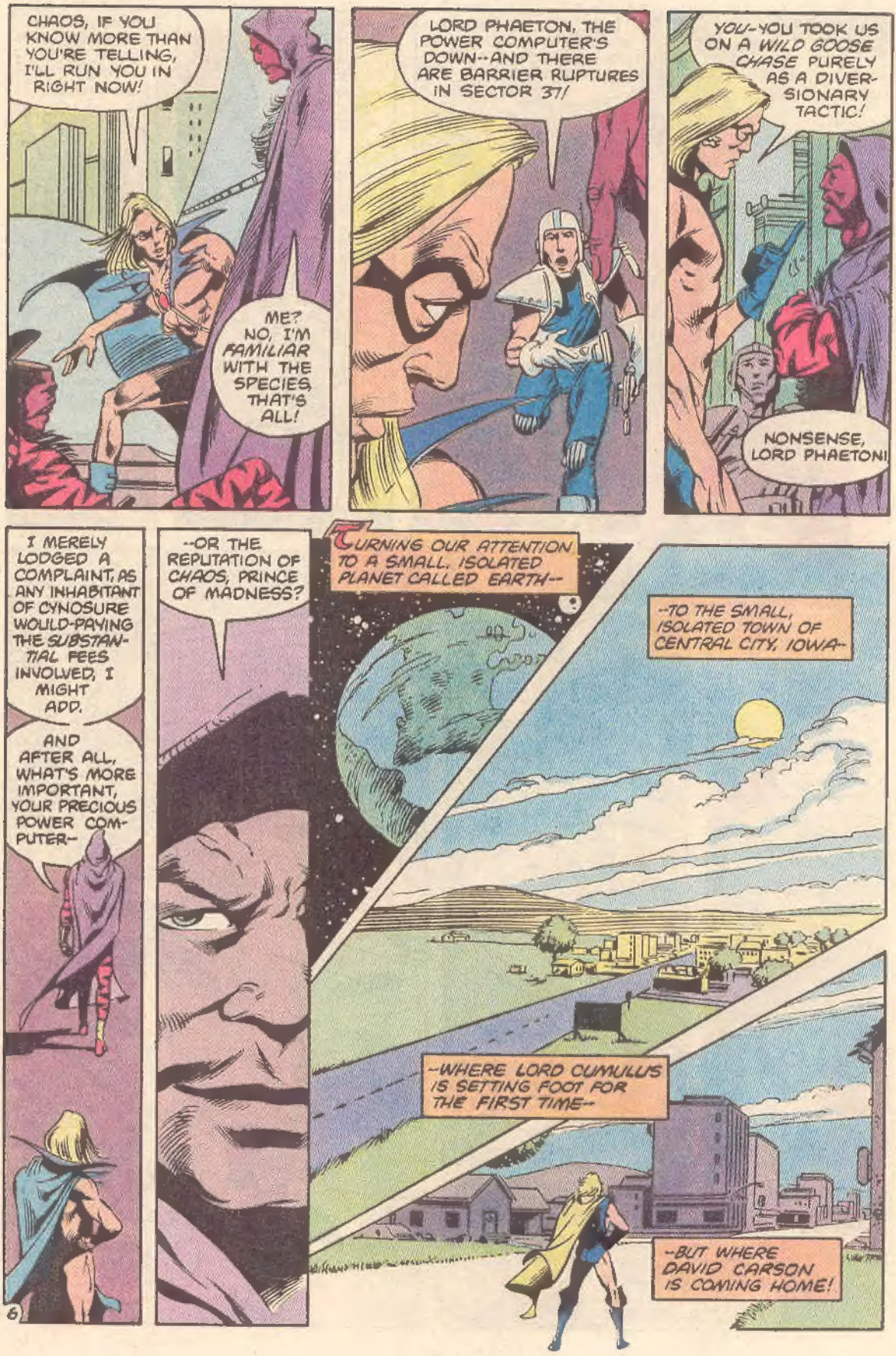
WARP™
Head Games
THE BEING HERE GOES BY THE NAME OF CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS. THE LOCATION IS THE PANDIMENSIONAL CITY OF CYNOSURE.
OF LATE, SAID BEING HAS TAKEN UP RESIDENCE IN SAID CITY.
THEIR RELATIONSHIP HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STORMY ONE, AND NOW IS NO EXCEPTION.
PETER B. GILLIS—WRITER
JERRY BINGHAM—ARTIST
MIKE GUSTOVICH—INKER
KEN BRUZENAK—LETTERER
JANICE COHEN—COLORIST
MIKE GOLD—EDITOR
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND


STOP HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET TO THE MAIN ARCADE!
WHOMP THAT SUCKER!
GLO-BA-OOM
I'M AFRAID YOU'VE CHOSEN THE WRONG PERSON TO CHASE!
I'M AGILE-- ERRATIC-
VIP
--EXTREMELY LIGHT ON MY FEET!
BONK!
DUNK!
AND, WITH A LITTLE TECHNICAL HELP--
EXCUSE ME, BUT I'M COMMANDEERING THIS DROP TUBE.
DEPARTURES
THOK!
IT'S BEEN FUN, BOYS!
ONE SIDE! ONE SIDE! POLICE BUSINESS!
DAMN WANKS!
BUNCHA MOOKS!
IT SHOULD TAKE THEM SOME TIME TO FIND WHAT LEVEL I'M ON!
2

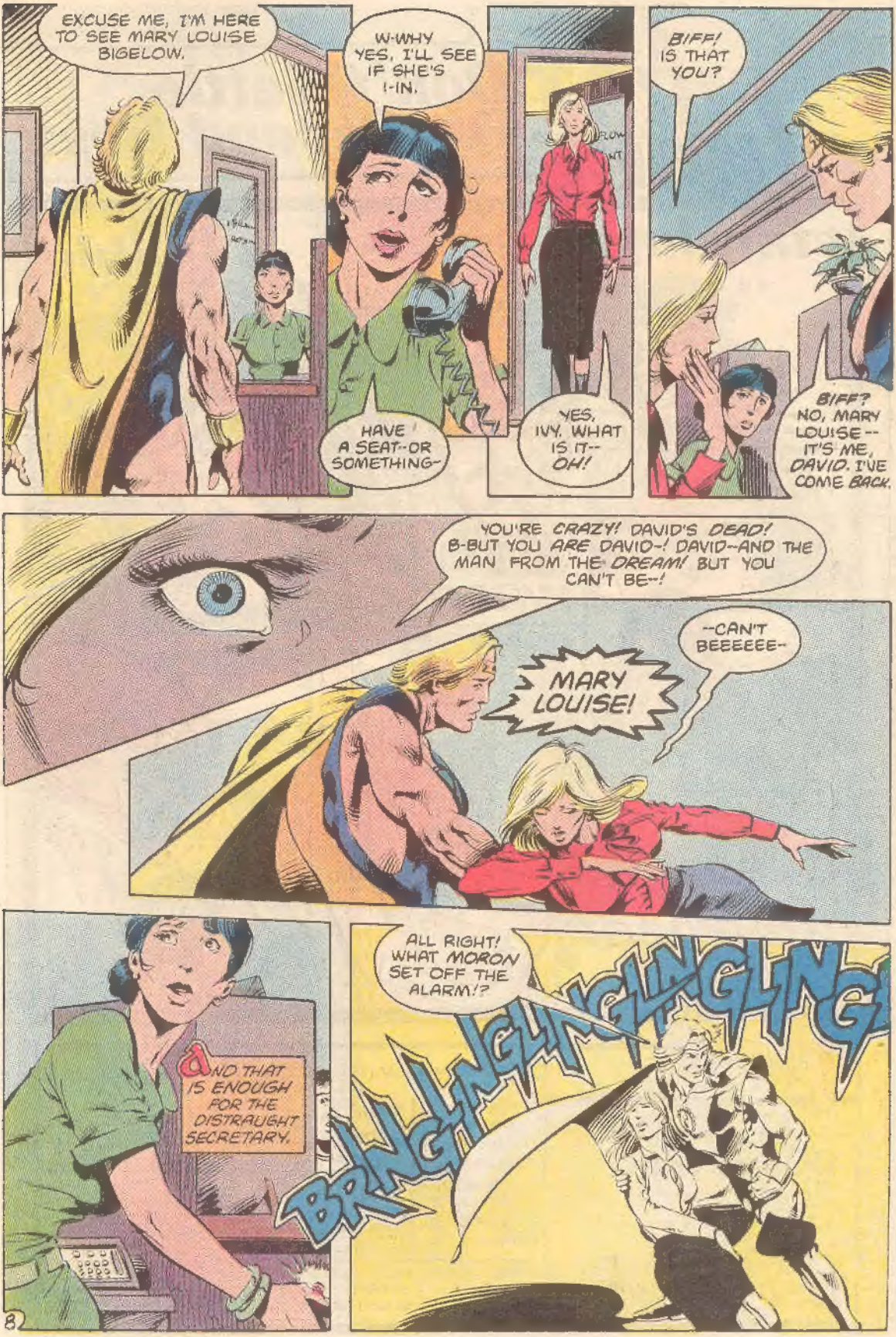

WHEN ARE THE PAN-DIMENSIONAL POLICE GOING TO REALIZE THEIRS IS A THANK-LESS JOB—
--AND (DID I HEAR SOMETHING?)--
GIVE IT UP, CHAOS!
SLAM!
I WANT YOU TO RESIST, PRINCE, I REALLY DO—SO I CAN POUND YOU INTO LUBRICANT!
MY! ONE WOULD THINK I HAD WRONGED YOU, TO HEAR YOU TALK!
POW! POW!
POW!
HEY, HOW'D YOU SLIP FREE?
MERELY A SHIFT INTO NEUTRINO MODE—GO AHEAD AND FIRE!
OR MAYBE YOU'D ENJOY SHOOTING ME IN THE BACK! IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY BEST SIDE!
BLAM
POP
POP
KRAKOW
STOP HIM! HE'S ESCAPING!

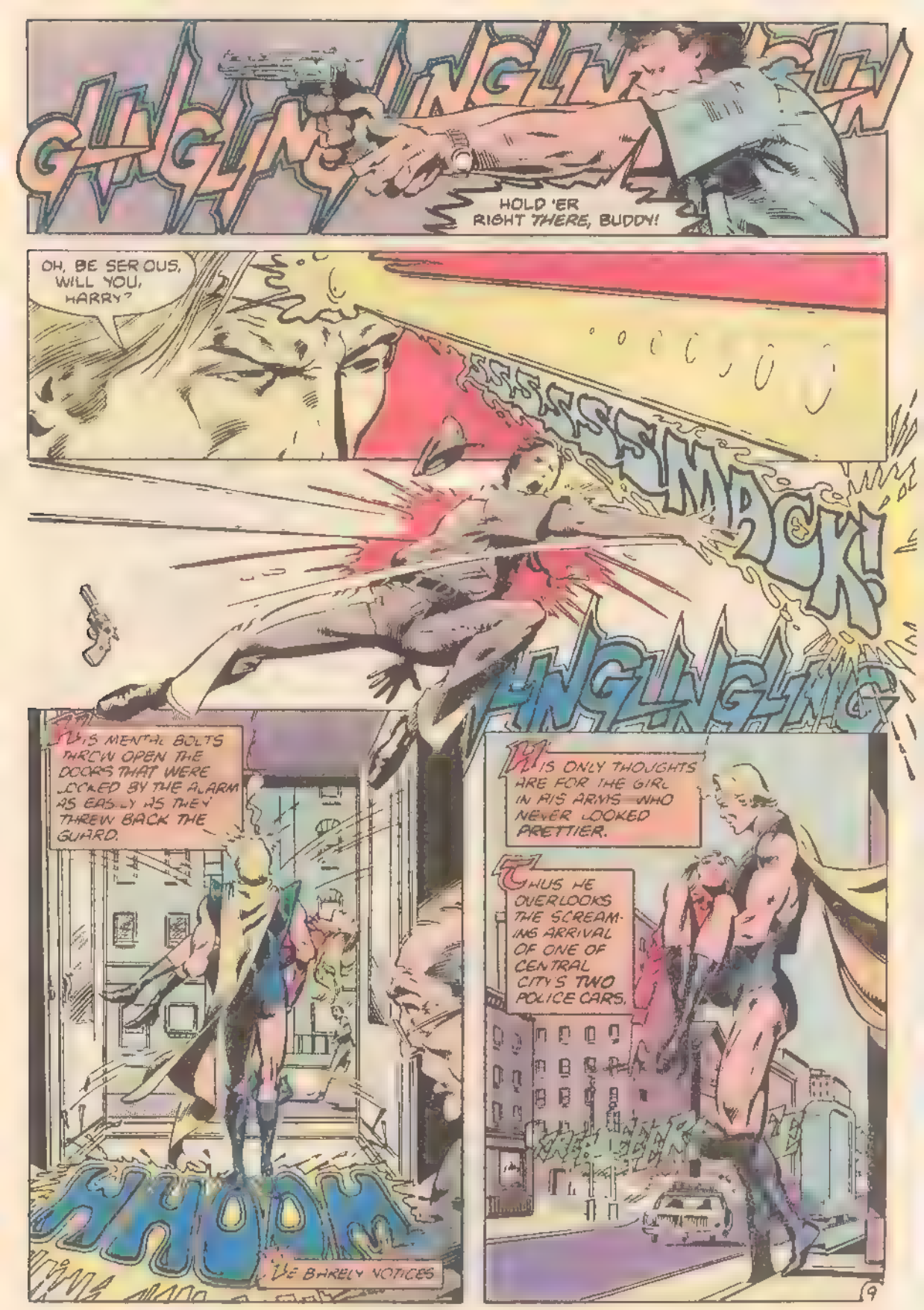
PLEASE DON'T TALK TO MY MEN LIKE THAT. GO NO FARTHER.
WHO--?
WE HAVEN'T MET YET, PRINCE OF MADNESS.
I AM PHAETON, PROTECTOR OF CYNOSURE
LET ME BREAK THIS TO YOU GENTLY, PRINCE--
--YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.
MY DEVICES DON'T WORK-!
WHAT ARE THE CHARGES, OFFICER?
FOR STARTERS, WE'LL TRY BREAKING-
--AND ENTERING!
CRUNK
NO! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
BRRRUNK

BUT I SEE I NEED GO NO FURTHER. PITY.
WELL, SIR? HAVE THE STIPULATIONS OF YOUR COMPLAINT BEEN FULFILLED?
YES, INDEED! THE THING HAS BEEN HALTED IN THE MOST HEINOUS OF CRIMES POSSIBLE--
THAT OF IMPERSONATING CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS!
AND YET IT LED MY MEN A CHASE THAT NO ANDROID SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF!
LET'S SEE WHAT IT'S MADE OF!
BUT--IT'S MORE THAN A MECHANISM--THERE'S AN ENTIRE CONTROL ROOM--
--MANNED BY A CREW OF--
--BLATTARIANS, I BELIEVE, PHAETON!
5

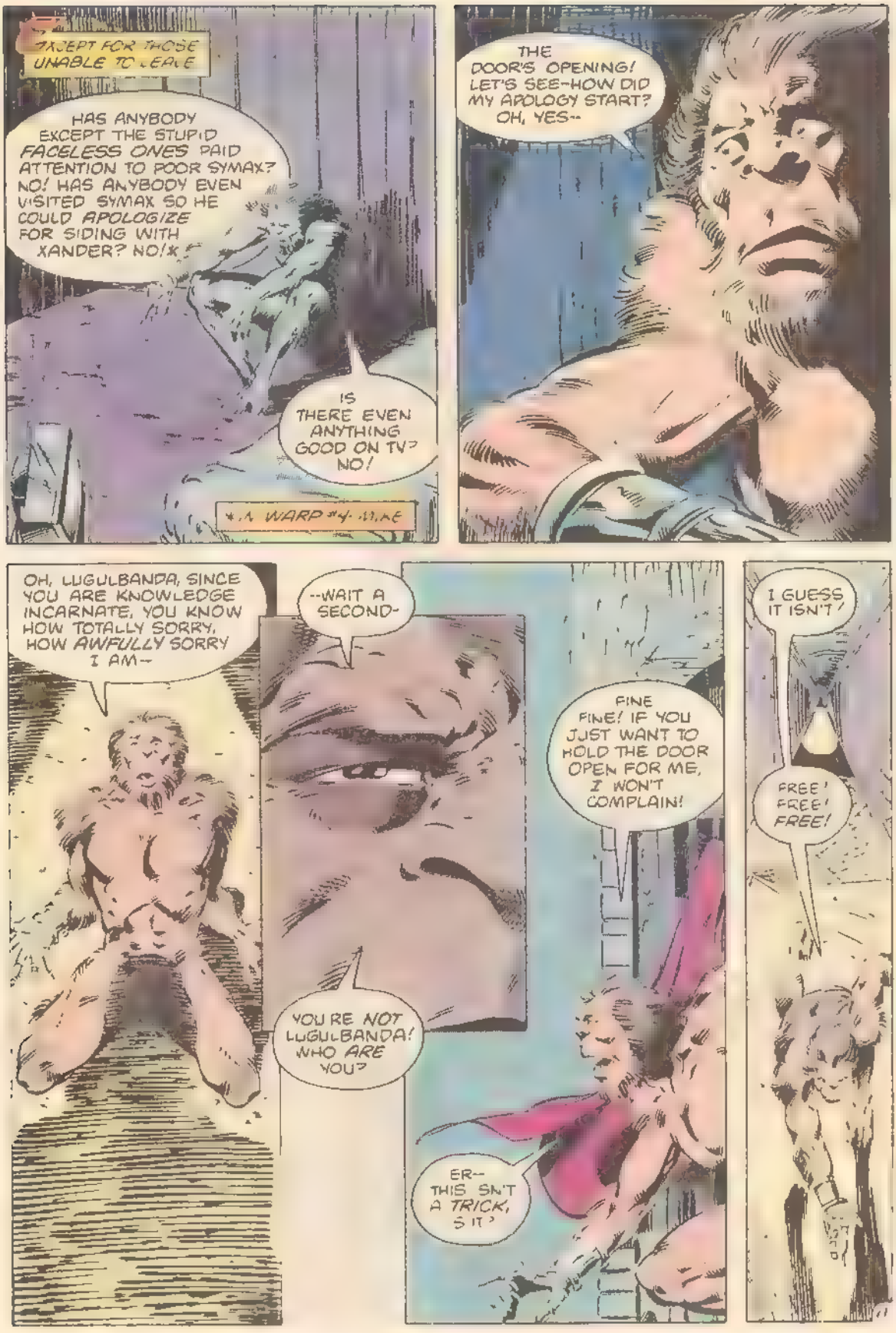

CHAOS, IF YOU KNOW MORE THAN YOU'RE TELLING, I'LL RUN YOU IN RIGHT NOW!
ME? NO, I'M FAMILIAR WITH THE SPECIES, THAT'S ALL!
LORD PHAETON, THE POWER COMPUTER'S DOWN--AND THERE ARE BARRIER RUPTURES IN SECTOR 37!
YOU--YOU TOOK US ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE PURELY AS A DIVERSIONARY TACTIC!
NONSENSE, LORD PHAETON!
I MERELY LODGED A COMPLAINT, AS ANY INHABITANT OF CYNOSURE WOULD--PAYING THE SUBSTANTIAL FEES INVOLVED, I MIGHT ADD.
AND AFTER ALL, WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT, YOUR PRECIOUS POWER COMPUTER--
--OR THE REPUTATION OF CHAOS, PRINCE OF MADNESS?
TURNING OUR ATTENTION TO A SMALL, ISOLATED PLANET CALLED EARTH--
--TO THE SMALL, ISOLATED TOWN OF CENTRAL CITY, IOWA--
--WHERE LORD CUMULUS IS SETTING FOOT FOR THE FIRST TIME--
--BUT WHERE DAVID CARSON IS COMING HOME!
6

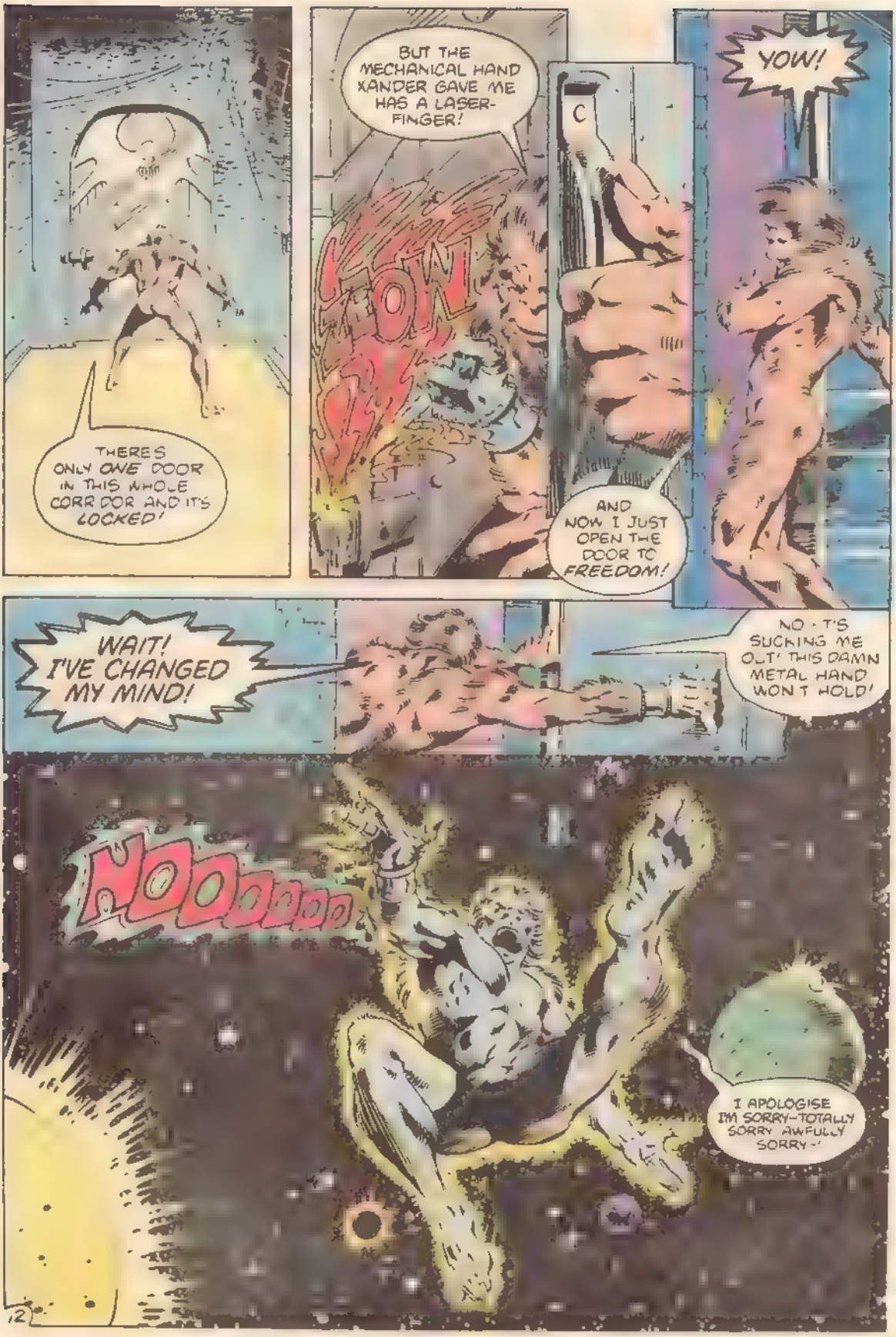
ALTHOUGH HE IS PROTECTOR OF FABLED FEN-RA, THIS IS WHERE HIS MEMORIES LIE-- WHERE HIS DREAMS GREW-- WHERE HIS LIFE WAS!
AND THOUGH HE REALIZES THERE IS LESS HERE THAN HE REMEMBERED--
--HE IS MORE THAN HE ONCE WAS.
NOT BAD. NOT BAD AT ALL.
AND SO HE ENTERS THE CENTRAL CITY BANK, WHERE, AS DAVID CARSON, HE WORKED AS A BANK TELLER--
--AND WHERE HE AND THE BANK PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER, MARY LOUISE BIGELOW, FELL IN LOVE.
CENTRAL CITY BANK
WHEN I LEFT, I WAS 5'8"--NOW I'M MORE LIKE 6'8"! OF COURSE, THAT WOULD MEAN SARGON'S OVER SIX FEET--
BUT SARGON'S THE LAST PERSON I WANT TO THINK OF NOW!
OH, MARY LOUISE, AM I GOING TO IMPRESS YOU!
HEY, MA! LOOKIT THE NAKED GUY!


EXCUSE ME, I'M HERE TO SEE MARY LOUISE BIGELOW.
W-WHY YES, I'LL SEE IF SHE'S I-IN.
HAVE A SEAT--OR SOMETHING-
YES, IVY. WHAT IS IT-- OH!
BIFF! IS THAT YOU?
BIFF? NO, MARY LOUISE-- IT'S ME, DAVID. I'VE COME BACK.
YOU'RE CRAZY! DAVID'S DEAD! B-BUT YOU ARE DAVID--! DAVID--AND THE MAN FROM THE DREAM! BUT YOU CAN'T BE--!
MARY LOUISE!
--CAN'T BEEEEEE--
AND THAT IS ENOUGH FOR THE DISTRAUGHT SECRETARY.
ALL RIGHT! WHAT MORON SET OFF THE ALARM!?
BRNGLNGLNGLNG!


GLNGLNG
HOLD 'ER RIGHT THERE, BUDDY!
OH, BE SERIOUS, WILL YOU, HARRY?
SSSSSMACK!
GLNGLNG
HIS MENTAL BOLTS THROW OPEN THE DOORS THAT WERE LOCKED BY THE ALARM AS EASILY AS THEY THREW BACK THE GUARD.
HIS ONLY THOUGHTS ARE FOR THE GIRL IN HIS ARMS—WHO NEVER LOOKED PRETTIER.
THUS HE OVERLOOKS THE SCREAMING ARRIVAL OF ONE OF CENTRAL CITY'S TWO POLICE CARS.
WHOOM
HE BARELY NOTICES
9

YEEEEEECH!
OK! HOLD 'ER RIGHT THERE, BUDDY!
POLICE
OH BE SERIOUS--
--WILL YOU, HARRY?
YOU'D THINK I WAS KING KONG OR SOMETHING.
BEYOND A THOUSAND UNIVERSES AWAY LIES THE CITY BOTH CUMULUS AND CHAOS HAD QUITE RECENTLY DEPARTED-- ANCIENT FEN-RA
THE HOLY CITY LIES IN SILENCE NOW. NEARLY TOTALLY DESERTED OF INHABITANTS


EXCEPT FOR THOSE UNABLE TO LEAVE
HAS ANYBODY EXCEPT THE STUPID FACELESS ONES PAID ATTENTION TO POOR SYMAX? NO! HAS ANYBODY EVEN VISITED SYMAX SO HE COULD APOLOGIZE FOR SIDING WITH XANDER? NO!
IS THERE EVEN ANYTHING GOOD ON TV? NO!
THE DOOR'S OPENING! LET'S SEE--HOW DID MY APOLOGY START? OH, YES--
OH, LUGULBANDA, SINCE YOU ARE KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE, YOU KNOW HOW TOTALLY SORRY, HOW AWFULLY SORRY I AM--
--WAIT A SECOND-
YOU'RE NOT LUGULBANDA! WHO ARE YOU?
FINE FINE! IF YOU JUST WANT TO HOLD THE DOOR OPEN FOR ME, I WON'T COMPLAIN!
ER-- THIS ISN'T A TRICK, IS IT?
I GUESS IT ISN'T!
FREE! FREE! FREE!


THERE'S ONLY ONE DOOR IN THIS WHOLE CORRIDOR AND IT'S LOCKED!
BUT THE MECHANICAL HAND XANDER GAVE ME HAS A LASER-FINGER!
FOOM
C
AND NOW I JUST OPEN THE DOOR TO FREEDOM!
YOW!
WAIT! I'VE CHANGED MY MIND!
NO - IT'S SUCKING ME OUT! THIS DAMN METAL HAND WON'T HOLD!
NOOOOOO
I APOLOGISE I'M SORRY-TOTALLY SORRY AWFULLY SORRY-!
12

ELSEWHERE, DEEPER INTO THE VOID THAT STRETCHES BEYOND FEN-RA--
A WOMAN NAMED SARGON SOARS ASTRIDE A ZONE OF FLIGHT--SARGON, WHO WAS ONCE MISTRESS OF WAR FOR FEN-RA, BUT IS NO LONGER.
SO, YOU'RE - ACTUALLY DOING IT, BRAVE WARRIOR? AFTER A THOUSAND BATTLES, A MILLION PERILS, YOU FINALLY TURN TAIL AND RUN--
--OVER SOMETHING AS TRIVIAL AS SEX?
WHAT ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF?
NO--IT'S NOT FEAR THAT'S THE PROBLEM--BUT LOVE!
ALL I AM IS A SOLDIER--ALL I'VE GOT IS CRUDE STRENGTH AND GUTS--AND HE MAKES ALL THAT SEEM SO...TRIVIAL!
I FELL IN LOVE WITH A LORD CUMULUS DARK OF HUE--SERENE, WISE AND CONFIDENT IN HIS COMPLETE POWER! *
HE DIED, AND THEN THERE AROSE A NEW CUMULUS--BUMBLING, NAIVE, BUT NOBLE AND GOOD BEYOND WORDS--AND THE LOVE RETURNED--
--AND THEN I WAS WITNESS TO CUMULUS THE GOD! ONE OF THEY WHO DREAM! A GOD WHO GAVE IT ALL UP-- FOR LOVE!
A WARRIOR LOSES HER FIGHTING SELF WHEN SHE SURRENDERS TO LOVE. AND TO LOVE CUMULUS-- I WOULD HAVE NOTHING OF WORTH LEFT!
* WARP SPECIAL #2--MIKE

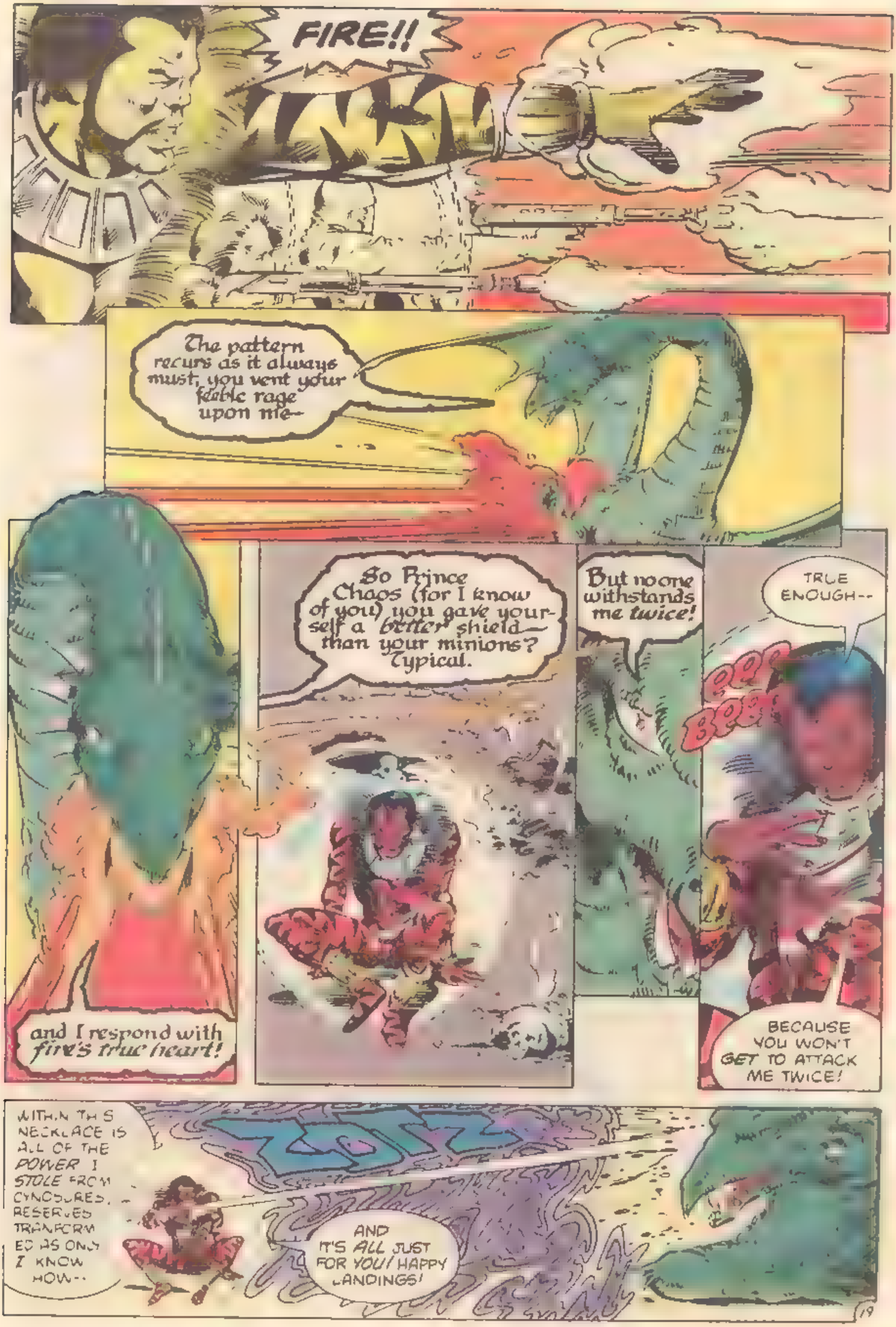
AND A SHORT, BUT UNSETTLING TRIP TO THE MEN'S SHOP (ON HER DAD'S CREDIT CARD) GOT CUMULUS SOME CLOTHES THAT NEARLY FIT.
CALLS FROM MARY LOUISE'S FATHER TO CALM DOWN THE POLICE.
SO WHO'S BIFF?
OH JUST A JOCK I DATED ONCE IN HIGH SCHOOL. HE READS COMIC BOOKS. LISTEN, THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT. I SAW DAVID DEAD. I SAW HIS BODY. HOW ?
I KNOW IT'S CRAZY MARY LOUISE BUT IT'S TRUE. I WAS PULLED--MY MIND WAS PULLED FROM DAVID CARSON'S BODY.
I WAS TAKEN TO ANOTHER DIMENSION AND PUT INTO THIS BODY, AND FORCED TO FIGHT BATTLES AND THINGS LIKE THAT. BUT I AM DAVID CARSON, AND I'VE COME BACK TO YOU
DAVID-- I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS--
--BUT I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE TIME YOU SPENT IN THE INSANE ASYLUM--EXCEPT THAT IF DAVID'S DEAD, THEN YOU'RE SOMEBODY ELSE ANYWAY AND IT DOESN'T MATTER--
OH GOD, I'M SO CONFUSED--
DON'T CRY--HEY, IT DOES SOUND LIKE A BAD MOVIE, BUT--
EVERYTHING'S WRONG--CRAZY--BUT YOU TALK LIKE DAVID, AND THERE'S A WEIRD DREAM THAT MAKES ME TRUST--
14

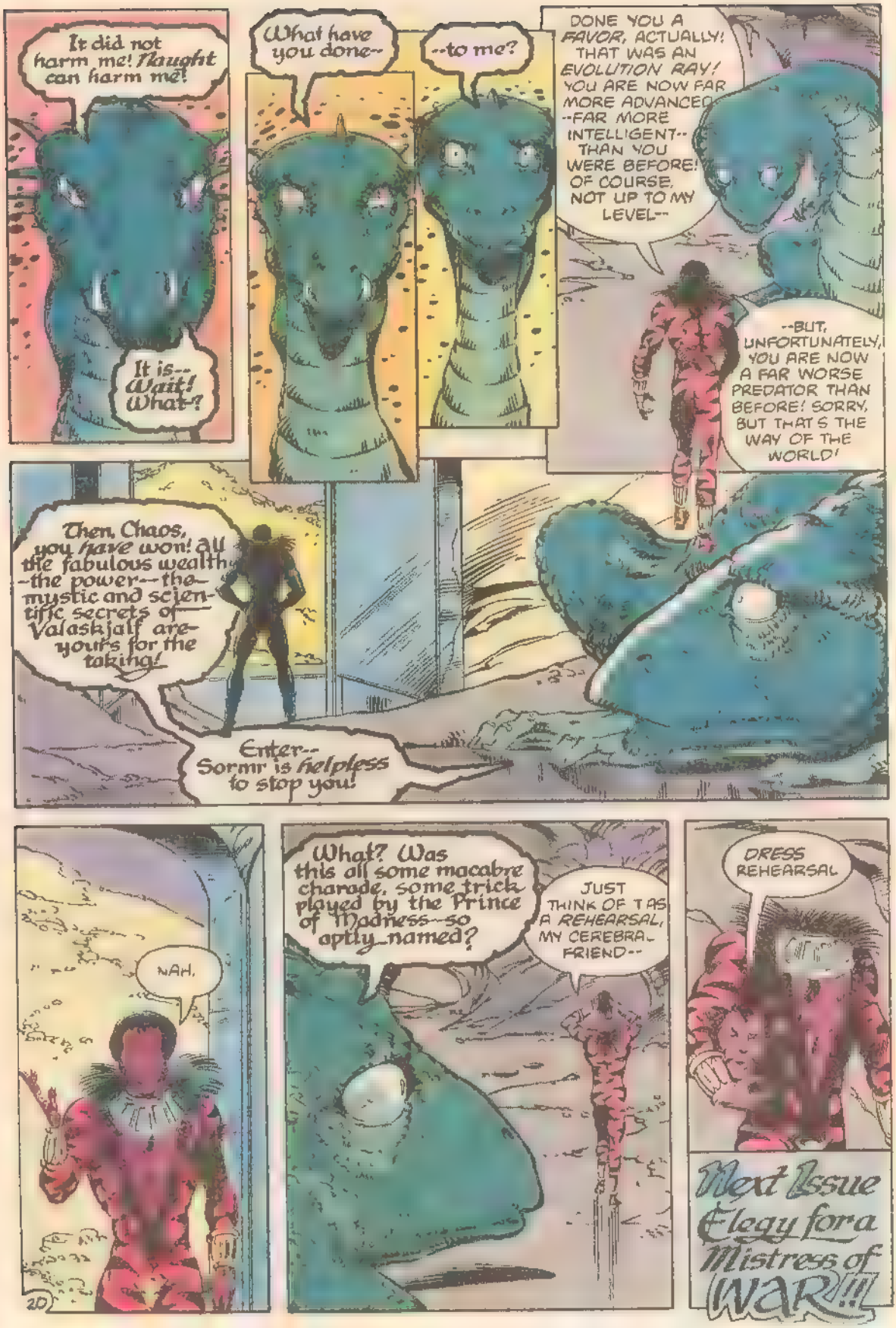
DAVID!!
MARY LOUISE! GET BACK!!
ALL RIGHT, DEMON! YOU'VE GOT MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR! FOR NOW YOU FACE LORD CUMULUS!
HAH! IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN THAT TO DOWN THE PROTECTOR OF FEN-RA!
HAVE AT YOU!
YOU ARE INDEED STRONG, MY SILENT FRIEND..

--BUT SCARCELY STRONG ENOUGH!
WHO SENT YOU DEMON? MY BROTHER, CHAOS? XANDER? DAGON? INFINITY? WHO?
IF I HAVE TO CRUSH THE ANSWERS OUT OF YOU, I WILL!
WHASH!
UNNH! I'VE GOT-- A HARDER HEAD THAN YOU THINK, DEMON--
--AND THAT MEANS--
--I DON'T GIVE UP--
--UNTIL I GET WHAT I WANT!
NO..N, ANSWER ME!

WHY DID YOU ATTACK ME? WHO SENT YOU? SPEAK!
SPEAK, OR I'LL-- WAIT! I'VE FELT THIS SENSATION BEFORE--!
STOP--!
"YOU'RE TURNING TIME--
"--BACK ON ITSELF-- ERASINGGGG..."
<SEE WARP #2
SO, WHO'S BIFF?
OH, JUST A JOCK I DATED ONCE IN HIGH SCHOOL--HEY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S NOTHING-- I JUST FELT-- STRANGELY-- WEAK FOR A MOMENT--!
IT'LL PASS!
NOT TOO LONG AFTER THAT, A GROUP OF ANXIOUS MERCENARIES, LED BY A FAMILIAR FIGURE, PENETRATE A LITTLE-FREQUENTED CORNER OF CYNOSURE--
I DON'T LIKE THIS--!
WHADDAYA MEAN?
HE TOLD US SOMEPLACE COLD, BUT HE DIDN'T SAY THE VALASKJALF GATE!
I MEAN NOBODY'S EVER COME BACK FROM THE VALASKJALF GATE! IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE--

--well-guarded. leave now, or leave never!
POSITIONS, TROOPS.
So you have made your decision. Welcome to the gate to the treasure world of Vulskjalf. I am its guardian. I am Sorrm!
I KNEW IT
Nor am I an ordinary reptile! But let me DEMONSTRATE .....
I choose that one--
--for speaking out of turn.
I KNEW IT
-BEHOLD!-
By my mind, he is turned to ice! And that is but one option. Pestilence, lightning, fire--
VERY WELL, WE CHOOSE -
18


FIRE!!
The pattern recurs as it always must, you vent your feeble rage upon me—
and I respond with fire's true heart!
So Prince Chaos (for I know of you) you gave yourself a better shield—than your minions? Typical.
But no one withstands me twice!
TRUE ENOUGH--
BECAUSE YOU WON'T GET TO ATTACK ME TWICE!
WITHIN THIS NECKLACE IS ALL OF THE POWER I STOLE FROM CYNOSURES, RESERVES TRANFORMED AS ONLY I KNOW HOW--
AND IT'S ALL JUST FOR YOU! HAPPY LANDINGS!


It did not harm me! Naught can harm me!
It is-- Wait! What-?
What have you done--
--to me?
DONE YOU A FAVOR, ACTUALLY! THAT WAS AN EVOLUTION RAY! YOU ARE NOW FAR MORE ADVANCED --FAR MORE INTELLIGENT-- THAN YOU WERE BEFORE! OF COURSE, NOT UP TO MY LEVEL--
--BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, YOU ARE NOW A FAR WORSE PREDATOR THAN BEFORE! SORRY, BUT THAT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD!
Then, Chaos, you have won! All the fabulous wealth --the power-- the-- mystic and scientific secrets of Valaskjalf are-- yours for the taking!
Enter-- Sormr is helpless to stop you!
NAH.
What? Was this all some macabre charade, some trick played by the Prince of Madness--so aptly named?
JUST THINK OF THIS AS A REHEARSAL, MY CEREBRAL FRIEND--
DRESS REHEARSAL
Next Issue Elegy for a Mistress of WAR!!!
20

# FIRST NOTES

## THE FIRST GRAPHIC NOVEL

During our hectic convention season — which started last spring and, as far as I can tell, has yet to end — the one question people kept asking me was "When is First Comics going to do a graphic novel?"

Generally, I replied, "When we have a story that's worthy of the format." It's my feeling that the majority of so-called graphic novels published in the past year or so were merely long comic book stories — the type of stories that we, back in the mid-1960s, used to call "annuals." Better paper, better color, and better printing, but the story itself was hardly worth $5.95.

Then **Jerry Bingham** tossed **Beowulf** on my lap.

**Beowulf,** for the uninitiated, is the epic poem written (it is believed) in the eighth century. It served as the inspiration for a whole *genre* of heroic fiction — Conan, for example. **Beowulf** is referred to as a classic — and it is just that, in both the historic and the aesthetic sense.

Bingham adapted the poem with an enthusiasm and a sense of history so far unseen in the comics medium. The artwork is not only the best in Jerry's career — it is among the very best stuff I've seen in my ten years in the comics business.

(Yeah, I know, when everybody hypes their latest product, they always say, "This is the best!" But *I* rarely succumb to such hyperbole — at least, not in this column — and, after all, the graphic novel is going on sale next month so you can flip through it and see for yourself.)

The story meets my basic criterion for a graphic *novel*: it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. As noted, it also meets my second criterion: stunning artwork, aided in no small way by letterer/calligrapher **Ken Bruzenak** — letterer on **American Flagg!, Jon Sable-Freelance, Warp,** and **E-Man.** A fantastic letterer and a swell guy.

Quite frankly, First Comics wasn't going to get into the graphic novel field until this spring — until Jerry showed us **Beowulf.** Then we pulled out all the stops.

So we delayed introduction of our next monthly and pushed ahead our graphic novel plans. And if you pick up on a massive feeling of pride while reading this little editorial, well, you're not reading anything in, believe me.

**Beowulf** — First Comics' first graphic novel. Out there in January. Check it out.

## FAMILY ALBUM

It's been a while since we've exposed ourselves to you (no, that didn't come out exactly the way I intended, but the word processor is broken and I'm on deadline) ... so ..

We have two people to welcome to First Comics. Those of you who read the indicia on our inside front-cover (we have the funniest indicia in comics, at least since Marvel cancelled Crazy) no doubt noticed a new name: **Ralph C. Musicant,** our operations director. Ralph is a graduate of The Harvard Law School

and a former professor at Northwestern University's business school here in Evanston; he's also been a director of First Comics since our inception. Ralph will be lending his vast experience to the administrative side of the company — no doubt you've already noticed the onslaught of First Comics-related merchandising items — and he's letting us play with Gandolf, his gargantuan sweetheart of a dog. I'll bet First is the only comic book company with a water bowl on the floor next to the office refrigerator.

And it is with great love that we welcome **Benjamin Webster Truman** to both our offices and, for that matter, to the world. Benjamin is the product of (no doubt you've already guessed) **Timothy** and **Beth Truman,** and he was born September 22nd, only a week or two past deadline.

Timothy tells us Benjamin has huge, strong hands and will be inking backgrounds on Grimjack before too long.

Media stuff: Bruce Patterson and I had some great fun on Chicago's Saturday monster movie matinee, the far-famed *Son of Svengoolie* — possibly the funniest show on the tube, both off-camera and on. And, yess, we were doing research for **E-Man.** Turns out both Svengoolie (comedian Rich Koz) and producer Joe Oher are both comics fans and fans of First Comics. No wonder we had fun.

And the third-ever Lord Cumulus, actor Keith Szarabajka (the man who took the part to Broadway) is back on the great stage in another comics-oriented role, that of B.D. in the Doonesbury play. Keith's the second Warp actor to make it big on Broadway — Andre' (Xander) Du Shields starred in the original versions of both *The Wiz* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Best of luck in the helmut, Keith!

— Mike Gold

## FIRST IN DECEMBER

**American Flagg!** #7: Beginning — The State of the Union. Meet Luthor Ironheart, Flagg's new ... partner? **Howard Chaykin** provides the action.

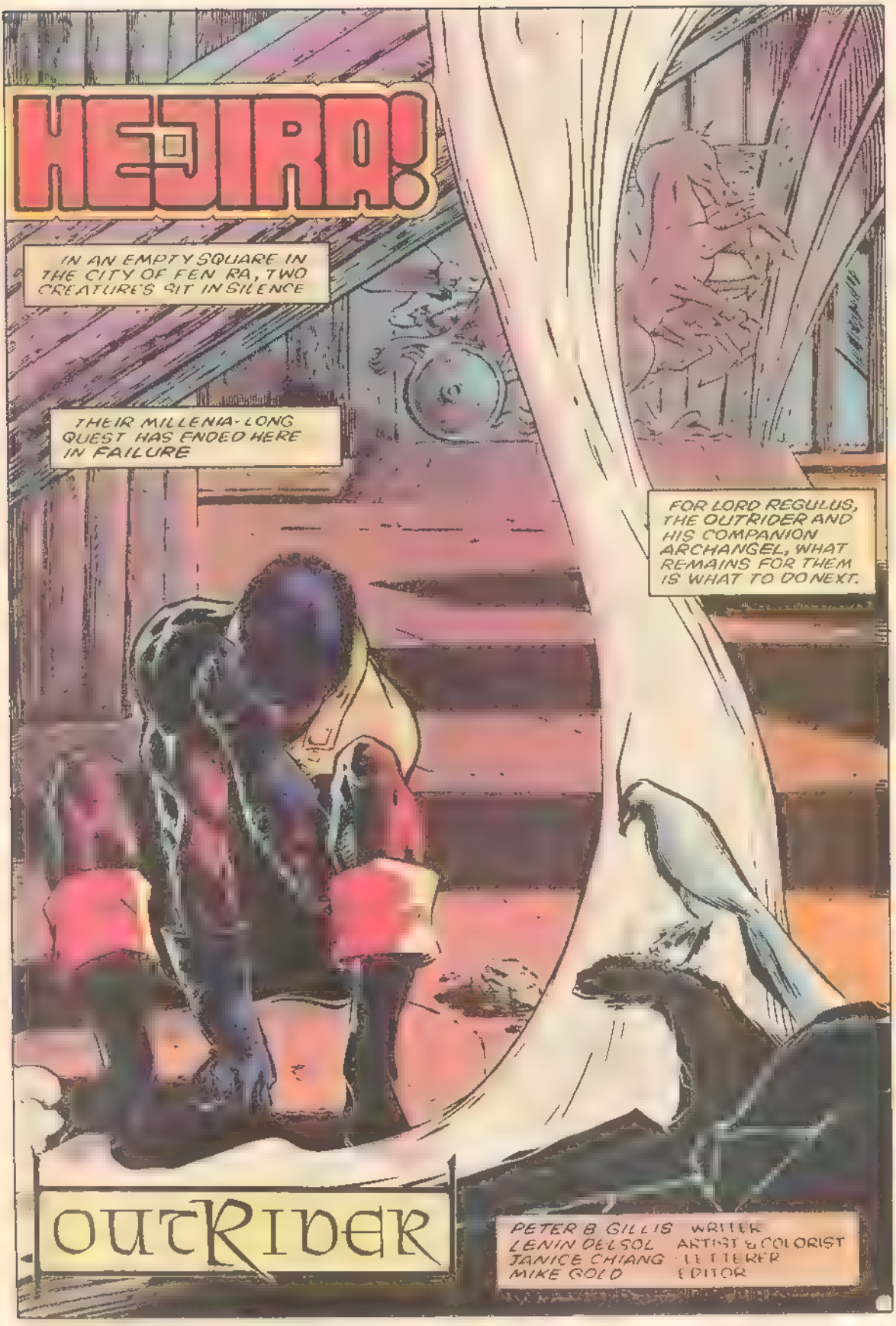
**E-Man** #13: E-Man takes on Prince Chaos in First's first cross-over ever! **Joe Staton** and **Rick Burchett,** writer/penciller and inker respectively, set the story in, Cynosure ... and in Indiana?

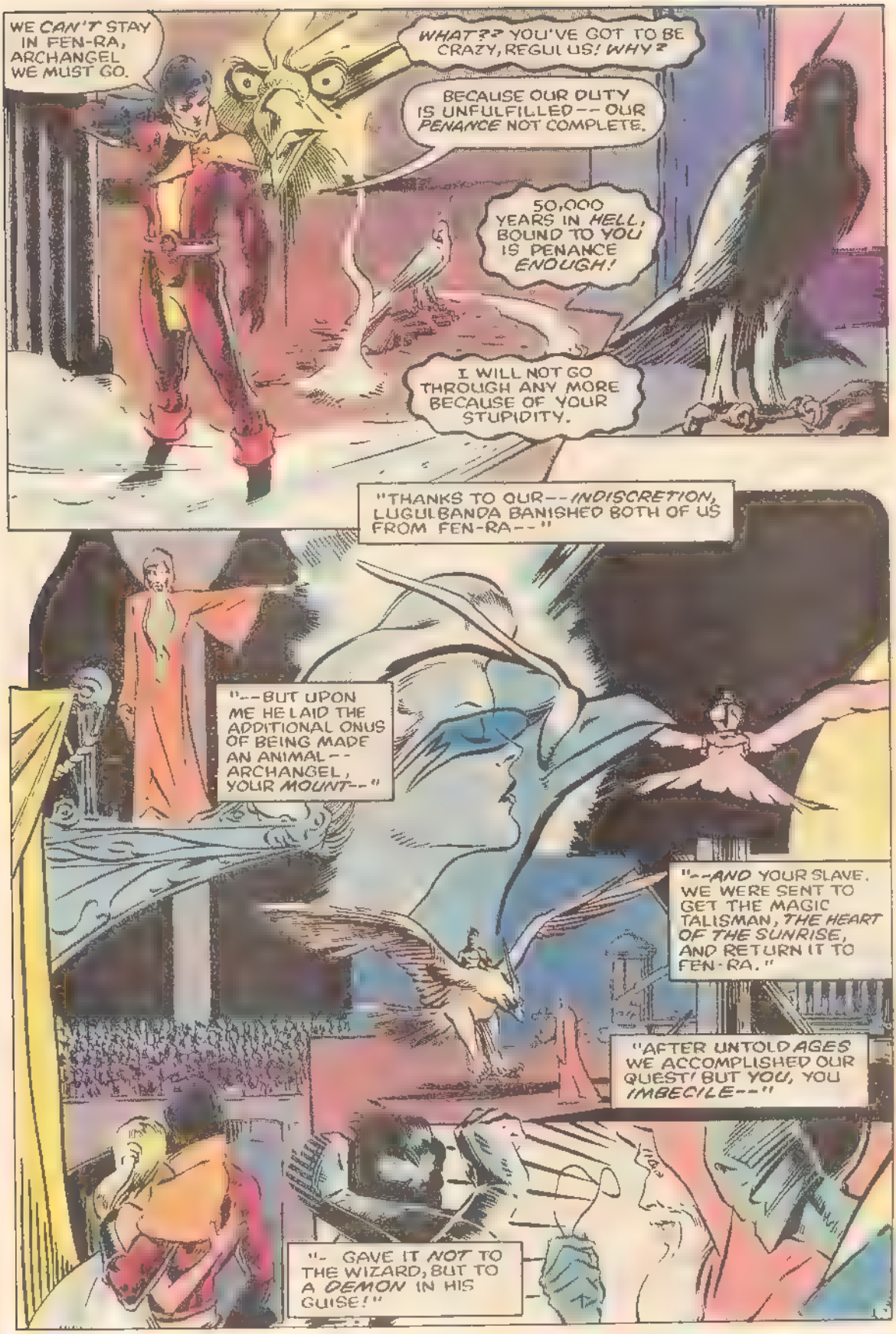
**Jon Sable, Freelance** #11: Introducing The Cat — the thief out to defeat Jon Sable — after she steals his heart! The latest **Mike Grell** creation.

**Mars** #4: The title sez it all: Dead Artists And Talking Dinosaurs! Plus the Black Flame in Nightmare Tapestry.

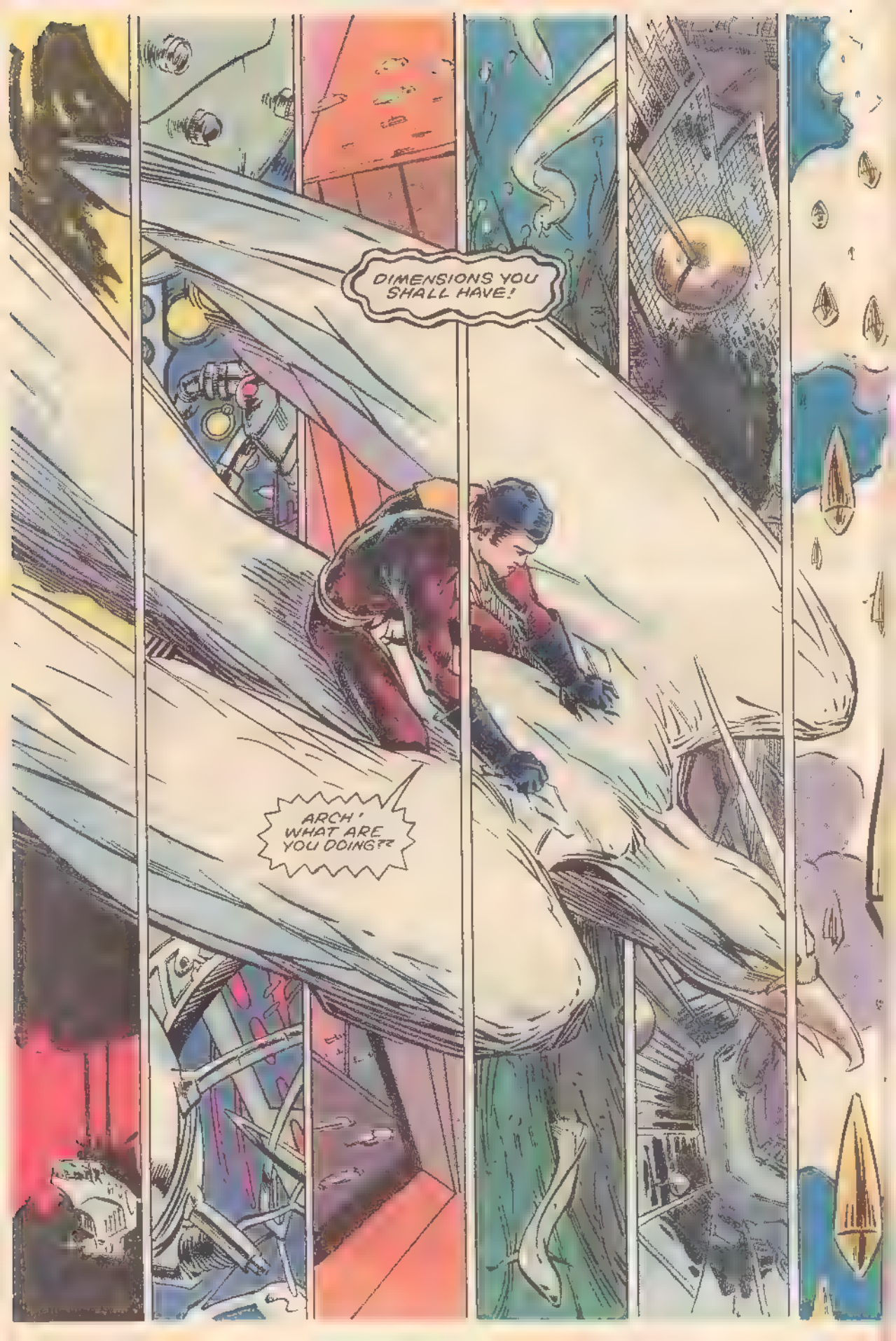
**Starslayer** #15: **John Ostrander** already named the lead Prey ... although **Timothy Truman** thought "Torin of the Apes" might be more appropriate! Plus: Grimjack!

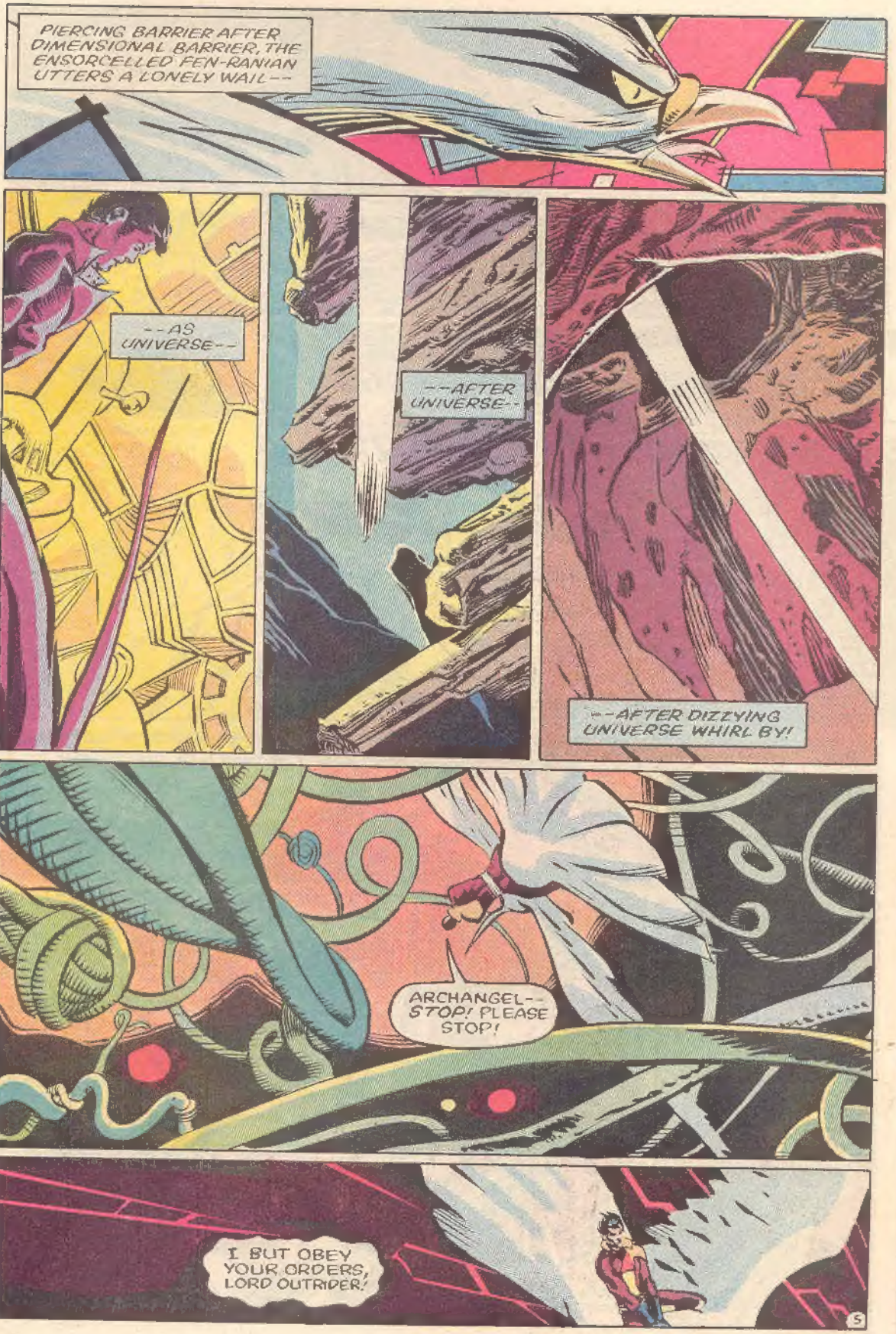
**Warp** #12: Chaos is taking over Cynosure! Lord Cumulus wants to get back with Mary Louise! Sargon leaves Fen-Ral! And Symax returns!


HEJIRA!
IN AN EMPTY SQUARE IN THE CITY OF FEN RA, TWO CREATURES SIT IN SILENCE
THEIR MILLENIA-LONG QUEST HAS ENDED HERE IN FAILURE
FOR LORD REGULUS, THE OUTRIDER AND HIS COMPANION ARCHANGEL, WHAT REMAINS FOR THEM IS WHAT TO DO NEXT.
OUTRIDER
PETER B GILLIS WRITER
LENIN OLLSOL ARTIST & COLORIST
JANICE CHIANG LETTERER
MIKE GOLD EDITOR


WE CAN'T STAY IN FEN-RA, ARCHANGEL WE MUST GO.
WHAT?? YOU'VE GOT TO BE CRAZY, REGULUS! WHY?
BECAUSE OUR DUTY IS UNFULFILLED -- OUR PENANCE NOT COMPLETE.
50,000 YEARS IN HELL, BOUND TO YOU IS PENANCE ENOUGH!
I WILL NOT GO THROUGH ANY MORE BECAUSE OF YOUR STUPIDITY.
"THANKS TO OUR -- INDISCRETION, LUGULBANDA BANISHED BOTH OF US FROM FEN-RA --"
"-- BUT UPON ME HE LAID THE ADDITIONAL ONUS OF BEING MADE AN ANIMAL -- ARCHANGEL, YOUR MOUNT --"
"-- AND YOUR SLAVE. WE WERE SENT TO GET THE MAGIC TALISMAN, THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE, AND RETURN IT TO FEN-RA."
"AFTER UNTOLD AGES WE ACCOMPLISHED OUR QUEST! BUT YOU, YOU IMBECILE --"
"-- GAVE IT NOT TO THE WIZARD, BUT TO A DEMON IN HIS GUISE!"

I TRIED TO STOP YOU- I SENSED IT WAS WRONG! I AM NOT GOING TO SUFFER MORE YEARS WITH YOU FOR YOUR BLUNDER!
YOUR WORDS ARE MEANINGLESS, ARCH.
THROUGH THIS GLOVE I STILL HAVE POWER OVER YOU--AND YOU SHALL OBEY.
DUTY, MILADY.
REGULUS--YOU'RE A MONSTER.
DAMN YOU DAMN YOU DAMN YOU!
BUT THE HEARTSICK ARCHANGEL SPREADS HER WINGS TO HER FULL SIZE, AND THE TWO DEPART FEN RA--
--A SOMBER, CRUMBLING, ODDLY DESERTED FEN-RA.
THE HOLY CITY--HOME--CAN'T WE LINGER HERE A BIT LONGER--TURN BACK FOR ONE LAST CIRCLING VIEW, MY LORD?
KEEP YOUR HEAD STRAIGHT, BIRD!
WE ARE BOUND FOR THE OUTER DIMENSIONS--AND IT IS THERE YOU SHALL TAKE ME!
VERY WELL, OUTRIDER -


DIMENSIONS YOU SHALL HAVE!
ARCH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!


PIERCING BARRIER AFTER DIMENSIONAL BARRIER, THE ENSORCELLED FEN-RANIAN UTTERS A LONELY WAIL--
--AS UNIVERSE--
--AFTER UNIVERSE--
--AFTER DIZZYING UNIVERSE WHIRL BY!
ARCHANGEL-- STOP! PLEASE STOP!
I BUT OBEY YOUR ORDERS, LORD OUTRIDER!

I WANT TO DIE, REGULUS! I WANT TO DIE!
ARCHANGEL--MILADY--SLOW DOWN! LET THIS DESPAIR WASH OVER YOU! WE'VE FACED WORSE THAN THIS! WE CAN DO IT!
NO, MILORD--THIS IS THE LAST SORROW. THE LAST.
THIS WILL BE OUR PENANCE--TO LAY OURSELVES DOWN IN AN UNKNOWN UNIVERSE--AND LET IT ALL END.
MILADY--I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL. I--
--WAIT! THOSE SPARKS--EXPLODING AROUND US--!
ARCHANGEL--YOU'VE LANDED US IN AN ANTIMATTER UNIVERSE! WE'VE GOT TO ESCAPE!
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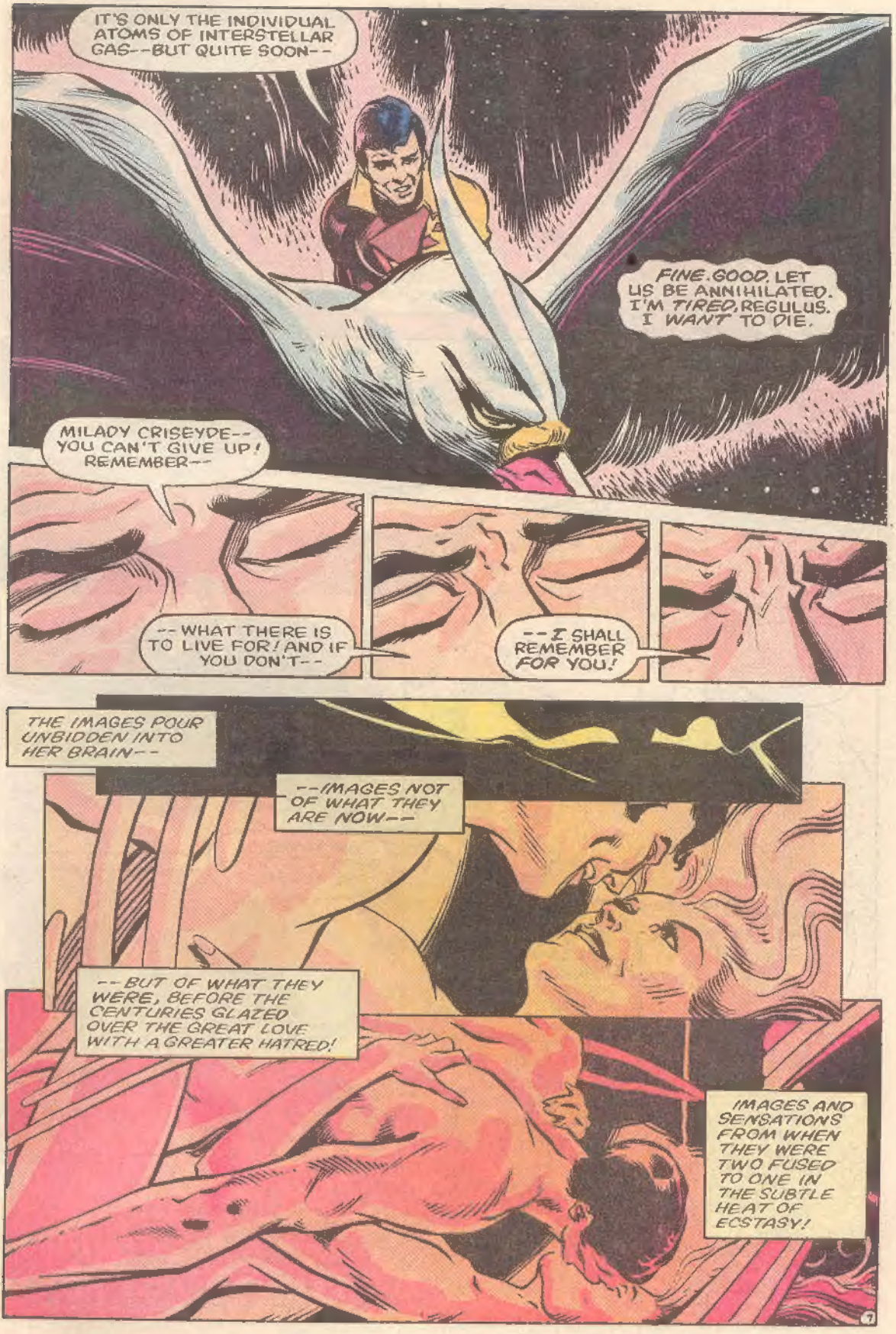
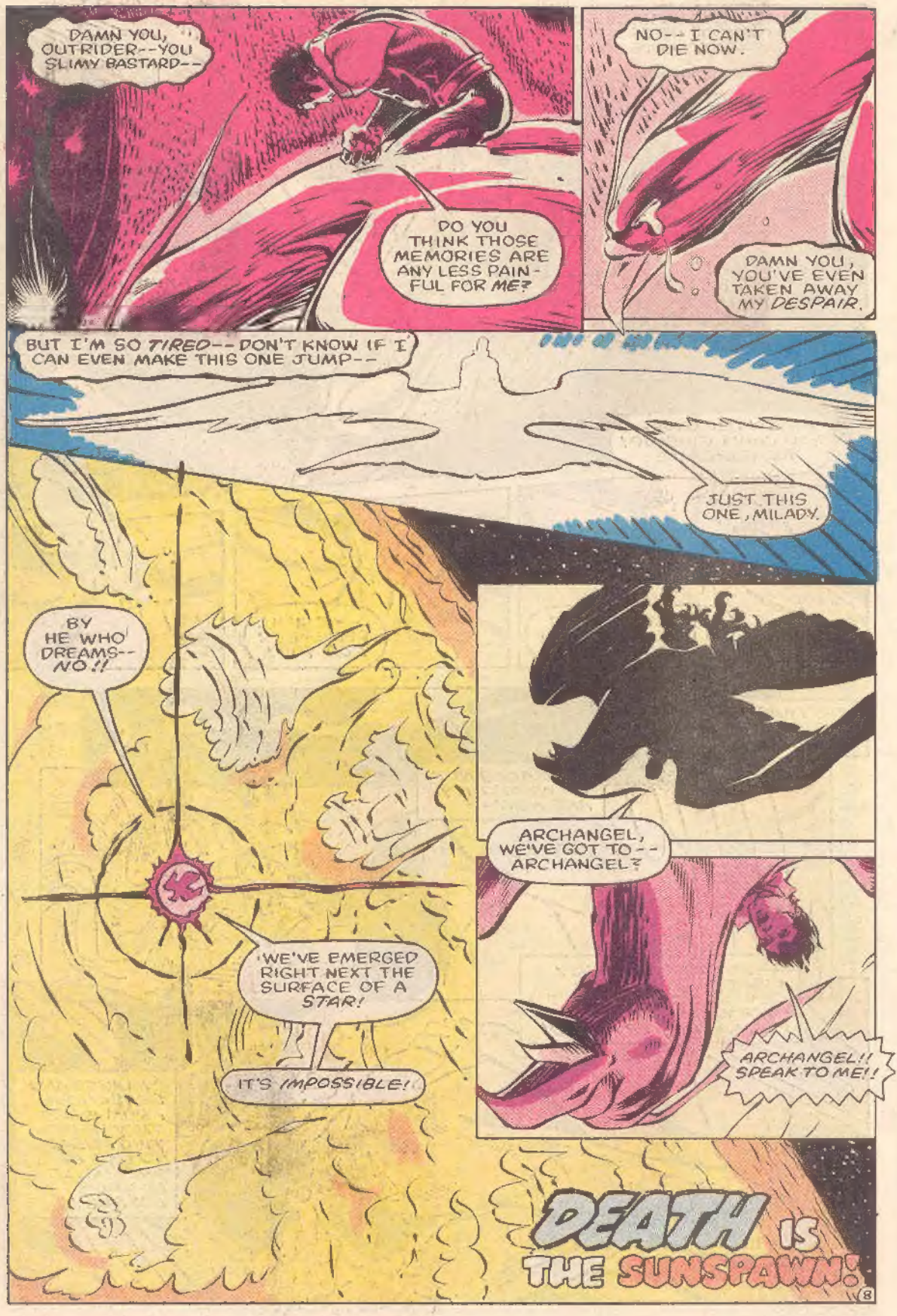

IT'S ONLY THE INDIVIDUAL ATOMS OF INTERSTELLAR GAS--BUT QUITE SOON--
FINE. GOOD. LET US BE ANNIHILATED. I'M *TIRED*, REGULUS. I *WANT* TO DIE.
MILADY CRISEYDE--YOU CAN'T GIVE UP! REMEMBER--
--WHAT THERE IS TO LIVE FOR! AND IF YOU DON'T--
--I SHALL REMEMBER *FOR* YOU!
THE IMAGES POUR UNBIDDEN INTO HER BRAIN--
--IMAGES NOT OF WHAT THEY ARE NOW--
--BUT OF WHAT THEY *WERE*, BEFORE THE CENTURIES GLAZED OVER THE GREAT LOVE WITH A GREATER HATRED!
IMAGES AND SENSATIONS FROM WHEN THEY WERE TWO FUSED TO ONE IN THE SUBTLE HEAT OF ECSTASY!


DAMN YOU, OUTRIDER--YOU SLIMY BASTARD--
DO YOU THINK THOSE MEMORIES ARE ANY LESS PAINFUL FOR ME?
NO--I CAN'T DIE NOW.
DAMN YOU, YOU'VE EVEN TAKEN AWAY MY DESPAIR.
BUT I'M SO TIRED--DON'T KNOW IF I CAN EVEN MAKE THIS ONE JUMP--
JUST THIS ONE, MILADY.
BY HE WHO DREAMS--NO!!
WE'VE EMERGED RIGHT NEXT THE SURFACE OF A STAR!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
ARCHANGEL, WE'VE GOT TO--ARCHANGEL?
ARCHANGEL!! SPEAK TO ME!!
DEATH IS THE SUNSPAWN!